

What is claimed is:-

1. A method comprising: -
maintaining a record of information for determining the approach of task
5 due dates for a plurality of client entities;
maintaining hypermedia server means for receiving task performance
instructions;
at a plurality of times, sending an electronic message to each client entity for
which a task due date falls within a succeeding predetermined period; and
10 receiving an instruction to perform a task from a client entity by means of
the hypermedia server means,
wherein said electronic messages include means for causing a client entity to
request a page from the hypermedia server means.
- 15 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the electronic messages do not
identify the task due dates to which they relate.
3. A method according to claim 1, including, after receiving said page request,
building an HTML form with a control element for each task due date for the
20 requesting client entity, the control elements being configured for indicating
whether the respective task is to be performed.
4. A method according to claim 1, responding to said page request by sending a
login form to the requesting client entity, the login form including controls for the
25 input of a username and a password.
5. A method according to claim 1, including performing said task in response
to said instruction.
- 30 6. A method according to claim 5, wherein said task is payment of a renewal fee
for an intellectual property right.
7. An apparatus for administering a repetitive task, the apparatus comprising: -

hypermedia server means for receiving task performance instruction; and
data processing means configured for maintaining a record of information
for determining the approach of task due dates for a plurality of client entities and,
at a plurality of times, sending an electronic message to each client entity for which
5 a task due date falls within a succeeding predetermined period,

wherein said electronic messages include means for causing a client entity to
request a page from the hypermedia server means.

8. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the electronic messages do not
10 identify the task due dates to which they relate.

9. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the hypermedia server means is
configured for building an HTML form with a control element for each task due
date for the requesting client entity, after receiving said page request, the control
15 elements being configured for indicating whether the respective task is to be
performed.

10. An apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the hypermedia server means is
responsive to said page request to send a login form to the requesting client entity,
20 the login form including controls for the input of a username and a password.

11. A reminder and actioning method comprising the steps of:-
maintaining a record of information for determining the approach of task
due dates for a plurality of client entities;
25 sending an electronic message to a client entity for which a task due date
falls within a succeeding predetermined period, said message including an identifier
of a page obtainable from a hypermedia server;
receiving and displaying said message at a client apparatus;
performing a selection operation of said identifier in said displayed message
30 and, in response thereto, loading the identified page into a hypermedia browser of
the client apparatus;

sending a hypermedia form page from said hypermedia server, said form page identifying the task whose due date triggered said message and having input means for accepting task performance instructions in respect of said task;

accepting a task performance instruction using said input means and
5 submitting said instruction to said hypermedia server;
receiving said instruction at the hypermedia server; and
performing said task in response to a received instruction therefor.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein said electronic message does not
10 identify the task due date or dates to which it relates.

13. A method according to claim 11, wherein said form page includes input elements for accepting instructions in respect of a plurality of tasks.

14. A method according to claim 11, wherein a login form page is identified by
15 said identifier, said login form page including controls for the input of a username and a password, and said hypermedia form page is sent in response to submission of a valid username-password combination using said login form page.

15. A method according to claim 11, wherein said task is payment of a renewal
20 fee for an intellectual property right.

16. A reminder and actioning system comprising:-
a database for storing information for determining the approach of task due
25 dates for a plurality of client entities;

electronic messaging means, having access to said database, for sending electronic messages to client entities for which a task due date falls within a succeeding predetermined period, said messages including an identifier of a hypermedia page;
30 a hypermedia server for serving a form page having a list identifying tasks due, obtained using said database, for a client entity requesting said page and including controls for accepting task actioning instructions in respect of the or each identified task due; and

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19. A system according to claim 16, wherein said tasks comprise payment of renewal fees for an intellectual property right.